



New Hampshire

Department of Education

Nineteenth Annual Celebrating Leadership in Education Awards Ceremony

*NH State Finalists of the
Presidential Award for Excellence in
Mathematics and Science Teaching*

Blue Ribbon Schools

2022 Teacher of the Year Semi-Finalists

2022 Teacher of the Year Finalists

2022 Teacher of the Year

December 2, 2021
DoubleTree by Hilton
Manchester, NH

Program

Arrivals and Reception

Welcome

Frank Edelblut, Commissioner, Department of Education

Remarks

First Lady Valerie Sununu

Dinner

Recognitions

- ◇ 2020 NH State Finalists of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching
- ◇ 2021 NH State Finalists of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching
- ◇ 2021 Blue Ribbon Schools
- ◇ 2022 NH Teacher of the Year Semi-Finalists, Finalists and Teacher of the Year

Remarks

Sara Casassa, 2022 NH Teacher of the Year

Every day a New Hampshire teacher makes a difference in the life of a child.

Every year the NH Department of Education honors outstanding educators who make their communities, profession, and the world a better place.

Message from Frank Edelblut

New Hampshire's Commissioner of Education

Tonight, at the 19th Annual Celebrating Leadership in Education Awards Ceremony, we celebrate New Hampshire's elite educators -- those who are working tirelessly to provide quality education to students throughout the state. This past year has created unprecedented challenges for teachers everywhere, which is why it is more important than ever to recognize this talented group and praise their commitment to education not just today, but always.

The New Hampshire Department of Education annually honors exemplary educators through various recognition programs, using their example to inspire and motivate others throughout the state. Each of you went above and beyond to ensure that your students received impeccable lessons during an imperfect year that was not always ideal for learning.

The goal of these awards is to amplify teacher voices and empower educators to take part in critical conversations regarding decisions affecting students, teachers and education as a whole. We know that teachers can change lives. Their work is never-ending, but New Hampshire teachers are tireless, energetic and determined to create paths to bright futures.

Reaching beyond test scores, these awards recognize the total commitment to excellence in education in New Hampshire. I am especially proud of those teachers who have spent the past year creating more engaging and unique opportunities for students, helping them reach high levels of achievement, meeting individual learning styles and truly connecting with children in the midst of a pandemic.

Thank you to all of the educators in New Hampshire for not just teaching academics, but for also teaching knowledge, character and patience. It's only fitting that we celebrate your essential roles.

New Hampshire Teacher of the Year

Each year, since 1952, New Hampshire schools have taken part in the State and National Teacher of the Year program. Educators are selected from any New Hampshire state-approved or accredited school, pre-kindergarten through grade 12, if they are planning to continue in an active teaching status. The purpose of the program is to select a teacher who is capable of speaking for and energizing the teaching profession, and representing the positive contributions of all teachers statewide. The Teacher of the Year serves as a leader and ambassador for all the outstanding teachers devoted to the highest level of student learning. This individual has the respect and admiration of their colleagues, as well as:

- Is an expert in their field who guides students of all backgrounds and abilities to achieve excellence
- Collaborates with colleagues, students and families to create a school culture of respect and success
- Deliberately connects the classroom and key stakeholders to foster a strong community at large
- Demonstrates leadership and innovation inside and outside of the classroom walls that embodies lifelong learning
- Expresses themselves in an engaging and articulate way, and
- Is committed to improving education.

The National Teacher of the Year program, run by the Council of Chief State School Officers and presented by Voya Financial, identifies exceptional teachers in the country, recognizes their effective work in the classroom, amplifies their voices, and empowers them to participate in policy discussions at the state and national levels. It is the oldest and most prestigious honors program to focus public attention on excellence in teaching.

2022 NH Teacher of the Year



Sara Casassa

Barnard School, South Hampton

Teaching Experience: 30+ years

Sara McCarthy Casassa teaches middle school language arts and social studies at Barnard School in South Hampton, New Hampshire. She has taught middle school students for the past three decades and has been a teacher at Barnard School since 2009.

She has also been a technology integrator for grades 1-8, and served as webmaster. Casassa holds a Bachelors of Arts degree in English and History and Masters degree in English from Boston College. She is currently working on her C.A.G.S. in Curriculum and Instruction which she plans to use to support teachers in their work with students in reading and writing.

Casassa has been integral in the advancement of technology at Barnard School and played a pivotal role in transitioning the entire school to remote learning during the pandemic in the spring of 2020. She has shared her knowledge with peers at technology and literacy workshops and conferences where she enjoys coaching teachers and celebrating student work. Casassa values making connections with students and families, in the classroom and the community, and serves as cross country coach and yearbook advisor.

Casassa is a lifelong learner and avid reader who has used her wide knowledge of books and authors to create vibrant, diverse learning experiences for her students.

2022 New Hampshire Teacher of the Year Finalists

- Carly Cohen, Auburn Village School, Auburn
- Andrew Tyler, Wilton-Lyndeborough Middle High School, Wilton

2022 New Hampshire Teacher of the Year Semi- Finalists

- Victoria Boothroyd, Wilkins Elementary School, Amherst
- Nancy Fothergill, Windham Center School, Windham
- John Thomas, Well Memorial School, Harrisville



Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST)

The PAEMST is administered by the National Science Foundation (NSF) on behalf of the White House. Established by Congress in 1983, the Presidential Awards are the nation's highest honors for teachers of mathematics and science. As New Hampshire state finalists, these recipients are now in the running to be selected at the national level.

The award recognizes outstanding K-12 teachers for their contributions in the classroom and to their profession, as well as acknowledges educators who are models in both their classrooms and in their communities. In addition this award provides positive examples for peers and students alike. The teachers receiving these awards are recognized for greatly improving their students' understanding in science, engineering, mathematics, and computer science for exemplary teaching, and for demonstrating educational goals that help them maintain positions of professional leadership. The goal of the program is to encourage highly capable individuals to enter and remain in the STEM teaching field.

The competition alternates each year between teachers of grades K-6 and grades 7-12. After an initial selection process at the state level, a national panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians, and educators recommends teachers to receive a national PAEMST award. Winners at the national level receive a \$10,000 award from the NSF, as well as a trip for two to Washington, D.C., for a week of professional development activities and celebratory events.

NH PAEMST 2020 State Finalist

Tristan Bowen

Riddle Brook School, Bedford

Teaching Experience—23 years

Tristan Bowen has been in education for over 20 years. She is a fourth grade teacher at the Riddle Brook School in Bedford, NH where she has distinguished herself as a teacher who is highly regarded by students

and parents as well as with building and district level administrators and colleagues. Ms. Bowen is a trained STEM docent through the University of New Hampshire and welcomes members of the community into her classroom to serve as STEM mentors for her students as they explore various science topics. In the words of her principal, Molly McCarthy, “Ms. Bowen is a bright, warm, and innovated professional who is a superior instructor: an expert at motivating, engaging, and moving students forward.”

NH PAEMST 2021 State Finalists

John Blackwell

Phillips-Exeter Academy, Exeter

Teaching Experience—17 years

John Blackwell has been involved in education at Phillips-Exeter Academy since 2004. Mr. Blackwell is described as someone whose teaching is student-centered; meeting students where they are at. In sharing his knowledge, he is able to cultivate his students’ interests and skills as they move forward in building their own understandings. Beyond being an instructor who leaves students feeling challenged and excited and colleagues feeling lifted and enriched, Mr. Blackwell is also the Director of the Grainger Observatory, manages and operates a fully equipped research facility at Phillips-Exeter Academy, and has been a speaker at both national and international conferences.

Sarah Clemmitt

Gorham Middle-High School, Gorham

Teaching Experience—23 years

Sarah Clemmitt is an experienced educator with over twenty years within the profession; the past twelve teaching science at Gorham Middle-High School. She is described by her principal, Jennifer Corri-gan as “a driven, organized teacher who develops relationships with her students as well as continually looking to build her skills as a teacher.” Ms. Clemmitt looks beyond the classroom to build and enrich her students’ learning through opportunities such as developing interdis-ci-

plinary experiences, through the integration of literature and STEM in a school-wide publication that compiled students' literary, artistic, mathematical and scientific highlights during the school year, and in having students participate each year in the JHSH conference so that they can share in the work and learning of other students throughout New England.

Joanna Marcotte

Franklin High School, Franklin

Teaching Experience—21 years

Joanna Marcotte, currently at Franklin High School, has twenty-some years in teaching. Ms. Marcotte is thought of by colleagues, administration, peers, parents, and students as a master teacher; being reflective, with deep content knowledge, and a strong interest and use of curriculum, instruction and assessment. Within her student centered classes, Ms. Marcotte encourages, supports, excites, and challenges her students to high levels of learning and in the application of that learning across multiple areas of their lives. Beyond the school and classroom, Ms. Marcotte is actively involved outside of the classroom in encouraging opportunities for students such as an Invitational Hackathon in the Boston area and a Congressional App Challenge, and in activities such as being an AP exam reader and in serving on the NH Computer Science Standards Development committee.

John Tietjen

Lebanon High School, Lebanon

Teaching Experience—17 years

John Tietjen is a seventeen year experienced and outstanding educator at Lebanon High School where he also serves as the science coordinator. He has developed and maintains strong relationships with his students and colleagues, and exhibits a strong dedication and passion to support and promote the sciences and STEM education to all students and is devoted to nourishing their achievements. Beyond the science classroom Mr. Tietjen has mentored Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) in German, a second language to him, initiated his school's part-

nership with New Hampshire Academy of Sciences (NHAS), and has directed Science Olympiad tournaments. His principal, Ian Smith, says of him, “As a colleague, his professionalism and enthusiasm for education and young people are immediately obvious.”

Holly Whitney

West Running Brook Middle School, Derry

Teaching Experience—13 years

Holly Whitney, a mathematics educator at West Running Brook Middle School in Derry has been teaching for approximately 13 years. Having come to teaching from the field of engineering, Ms. Whitney brings to her students a connection between the mathematical concepts they are learning and their application in life beyond the classroom; bringing the “why” to that ever perennial question of ‘when are we ever going to use this?’. Within the classroom, Ms. Whitney develops and supports students’ investment in their own learning through personalized learning opportunities, competency-based education, and pulling on their interests to encourage their engagement. Outside of the classroom, Ms. Whitney supports students through coaching and in being an advisor to several student clubs.



Blue Ribbon Schools

Since 2002, schools singled out for national honors will now reflect the goals of our nation’s new education reforms for high standards and accountability. The No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private K-12 schools that are either academically superior in their state or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools

- Grantham Village School, Grantham
- Memorial Elementary School, Bedford

The mission of the Department of Education is to provide educational leadership and services that promote equal educational opportunities and quality practices and programs that enable New Hampshire residents to become fully productive members of society

